

**TOWN OF CHESTER AND CHESTER TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 29, 2016**

Moderator William E. Dakin, Jr. called the Chester Town School District Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Moderator Dakin asked the voters if there was any objection to non-voters speaking, if asked to. There was no objection.

Moderator Dakin introduced the Chester Town School Directors: Alison DesLauriers, Marilyn Mahusky and Heather Chase. Moderator Dakin then read the Chester Town School District Warning.

The Legal Voters of the TOWN OF CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT are hereby notified and warned to meet at Chester Town Hall, Second Floor in said Town of Chester on Monday, February 29, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. to act on the following Articles. Voting on Articles 1, 2 and 3 will be by Australian Ballot on March 1, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Second Floor.

- ARTICLE 1:** To elect Town School District Officers for the ensuing year (Australian Ballot).
- ARTICLE 2:** To elect Directors for Chester-Andover Elementary School for the ensuing year (Australian Ballot).
- ARTICLE 3:** To elect Directors for Green Mountain Union High School for the ensuing year (Australian Ballot).
- ARTICLE 4:** To see if the Town School District will vote to raise \$228,597.00 to be paid to the Chester Town Treasurer on September 15, 2016, to pay current expenses and any part of the Town's indebtedness. Julie Hance moved Article 4 as printed. Seconded by Sandra Walker. Alison DesLauriers explained that this money is Pre-K students, Early Essential Education students, which are early education programs, and children under five years old with special education needs. Article 4 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 5:** To see if the Town School District will authorize the Directors to borrow money in anticipation of taxes to pay current expenses and any part of the Town School District's indebtedness. Alison DesLauriers moved Article 5 as printed. Seconded by Charlie Baker. Article 5 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 6:** To authorize the Town School District to accept payment from the State Department of Taxes under Act 68. Julie Hance moved Article 6 as printed. Seconded by Sandra Walker. Article 6 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 7:** To act on the reports of the Town School District Officers for the year ending December 31, 2015. Julie Hance moved Article 7 as printed. Seconded by Mark Verespy. Alison DesLauriers explained that the reports of the Chester Town School District can be found on pages 86 – 92. Article 7 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 8:** To transact any other business deemed proper when met. Alison DesLauriers gave an update on Act 46, the Consolidation Bill. Alison DesLauriers explained that there will be a forum in about a month to explain and answer any questions that people may have, with a vote in November. She also explained that the education tax rate is estimated to go down six cents this year. Julie Hance made a motion to adjourn the Chester Town School District Meeting. Seconded by Sandra Walker. Chester Town School District Meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Moderator Dakin explained that the Select Board would know take their seats.

Moderator Dakin called the Town Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. He then asked the voters if there was any objection to non-voters speaking, if asked to. There was no objection.

Moderator Dakin then introduced the Select Board: John DeBenedetti, Tom Bock, William Lindsay, Heather Chase and Arne Jonynas, Town Manager David Pisha and Town Clerk Deborah Aldrich.

Moderator Dakin then read the warning.

The Legal Voters of the TOWN OF CHESTER are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Chester Town Hall, Second Floor in said Town of Chester on Monday, February 29, 2016, at 6:00 pm., to act on the following Articles. Voting on Article 1, 2 and 3 will be by Australian ballot on March 1, 2016, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Chester Town Hall Second Floor.

ARTICLE 1: To elect Town Officials for the ensuing year as provided by the Public Laws of Vermont and citizens to serve on the Budget Committee (Australian Ballot).

ARTICLE 2: Shall general obligation bonds of the Town of Chester in an amount not to exceed Two Hundred Sixty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Dollars (\$269,900.00), subject to reduction from the receipt of available state and federal grants-in-aid, be issued for the purpose of purchasing the following capital items: \$8,500.00 for the purchase of a mower for the Cemetery Department; \$45,400.00 for the replacement of the pool decking for the Recreation Department; \$40,000.00 for the purchase of replacement hose for the Fire Department; \$18,500.00 for the purchase of two air paks for the Fire Department; \$11,000.00 for the purchase of washer/dryer unit for the Fire Department; \$15,000.00 for the purchase of a thermal camera for the Fire Department; \$70,000.00 for the upgrades to an existing pump station on Elm Street for the Sewer Department; \$30,000.00 for the purchase of a pickup truck for the Sewer Department; and \$31,500.00 for the replacement of fire hydrants for the Water Department. (Australian Ballot)

ARTICLE 3: Shall general obligation bonds of the Town of Chester in an amount not to exceed Two Hundred Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$220,000.00), subject to reduction from the receipt of available state and federal grants-in-aid, be issued for the purpose of paving approximately 5,300 feet of roadway. (Australian Ballot)

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to accept gifts and trust funds for perpetual care of cemetery lots in accordance with conditions of said gifts and trusts as follows: Joyce A. Daniels, \$250.00; Gordon and Gloria Snide, \$250.00; Michael and Christine Copping, \$250.00; Delores Robinson, \$250.00; Gail Stewart, \$250.00; Donald R. Farrar Estate, \$250.00; Paul F. and Norma J. Ippolito, \$500.00. Sandra Walker moved Article 4 as printed. Seconded by Melissa Post. Article 4 voted in the affirmative.

Representative Leigh Dakin explained some of the projects being worked on in Montpelier.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise \$2,847,925.67 to be paid to the Chester Town Treasurer on September 15, 2016, to pay current expenses and any part of the Town's indebtedness. William Lindsay moved Article 5 as printed. Seconded by Sandra Walker. Moderator Dakin explained that David Pisha, Town Manager, would now make a presentation on the budget. (copy attached). Charlie Baker asked what level of certification the new EMS person would have. Dan Cook explained that the new person would be EMT level certified. Charlie Baker asked when the State was going to finish the paving by Lisai's Market. David Pisha explained that is supposed to be done in the spring along with fixing the railroad tracks. Arne Jonynas

explained that Route 103 South from Rockingham to Rutland is supposed to be paved in the next couple of years. Charlie Baker asked if there was any money in the budget for the Police Department to get Go Pro Cameras. Chief Rick Cloud advised that the laws for those have not been settled on yet, but if they get cameras they will more than likely be Watch Guard Cameras; because that is the equipment they use know. Charlie Baker inquired about the washer/dryer unit for the Fire Department and how did the gear get cleaned before. Fire Chief Matt Wilson replied that Standards now say the gear has to be cleaned and that they have to be cleaned internally. Article 5 voted in the affirmative.

David Pisha thanked the Milanese/Huffer family for their donation of land for the Popple Dungeon Road project.

ARTICLE 6:

To see if the Town will vote to expend from the Capital Budget Reserve Fund, \$452,323.89 to be allocated as follows: \$6,500.00 for the purchase of fencing for Cobleigh Field for the Recreation Department; \$10,000.00 for the resurfacing and repainting of the basketball court for the Recreation Department; \$8,000.00 for the refurbishing of the Compressor at the Fire Department; \$7,500.00 for the purchase of pagers for the Fire Department; \$85,111.00 for the lease payment for the Fire Truck; \$133,000.00 for the purchase of a dump truck for the Highway Department; \$49,046.00 for the payment of the loader lease for the Highway Department; \$20,000.00 for the purchase of a pickup truck for the Highway Department; \$54,166.89 for the payment of sidewalk renovations; \$20,000.00 for the first payment for the renovations to Whiting Library; \$20,000.00 for improvements to the Town Hall building; and \$39,000.00 for the purchase of a Cruiser for the Police Department all as indicated on the Capital Budget Program schedule and less any grant funds that may be received. Kathy Pellett moved Article 6 as printed. Seconded by Alison DesLauriers. Tom Hildreth asked if the replacement truck for the Highway Department was for the truck that was totaled in the accident. David Pisha explained no, that truck has already been replaced with insurance money. The truck to be replaced is one of the trucks in the normal rotation. Nancy Lindsay asked if the fence for Cobleigh Field was replacing an existing fence. David Pisha explained no it is not. Cobleigh Field is being improved for girls' softball. There has been improvements, done by donations, of labor and materials at Cobleigh Field. Article 6 voted in the affirmative.

ARTICLE 7:

To see if the Town will vote to exempt from municipal and education taxes, for a period of five years, 100% of the Fair Market Value of lands and buildings occupied by the Chester Rod & Gun Club, Inc. Robert Pelletier moved Article 7 as printed. Seconded by Amber Wilson. Bruce Parks asked if someone had to be a member of the Rod & Gun Club to use the facility. Robert Pelletier replied yes. Dues are \$35.00 per year. These dues cover costs at the Club. Philip Perlah asked how much the taxes were on the Rod & Gun Club property. Wanda Purdy advised that the assessment is \$261,100.00 and the taxes are \$3,609.19 per year. Susie Forlie asked how many members the Rod & Gun Club has. Harry Goodell replied just over 200. Arne Jonynas stated that he understood that it is not open to the public and people have to leave if they are not a member. Robert Pelletier advised that people from out of state were trashing the premise so the Rod & Gun Club Board decided to charge a small fee to discourage this. Also, the flooding that has occurred at the property has cost them a lot of money. Robert Pelletier explained that the local and state police and the military use the Club for practice and they offer hunter safety courses at no charge. Scott Bonneville made a motion to amend Article 7 from a period of five years to a period of one year. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. Moderator Dakin explained that the voters would now vote on the amendment. **To see if the Town will vote to exempt from municipal and education taxes, for a period of one year, 100% of the Fair Market Value of lands and buildings occupied by the Chester Rod & Gun Club, Inc.** Amendment to Article 7 voted in the affirmative. Article 7, as amended, voted in the affirmative.

- ARTICLE 8:** **To see if the Town will vote to exempt from municipal and education taxes, for a period of five years, 100% of the Fair Market Value of lands and buildings occupied by the Green Mountain Softball League.** Ruth Douglas moved Article 8 as printed. Seconded by Charlie Baker. Robert Pelletier asked what the value of this property is. Wanda Purdy advised that the assessment is \$110,300.00 and the taxes are \$2,285.75 per year. Ben Whalen asked if the Green Mountain Softball team plays on this field. Alison DesLauriers replied not at this time, but they are hoping to start using the field again. Philip Perlah asked if this was a continuation of a previous exemption. Ruth Douglas replied yes it is a continuation. Robert Pelletier made a motion to amend Article 8 from a period of five years to a period of one year. Seconded by Marilyn Mahusky. Moderator Dakin explained that the voters would now vote on the amendment. **To see if the Town will vote to exempt from municipal and education taxes, for a period of one year, 100% of the Fair Market Value of lands and buildings occupied by the Green Mountain Softball League.** Amendment to Article 8 voted in the affirmative. Article 8, as amended, voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 9:** **To see if the Town will vote to exempt from municipal and education taxes, for a period of five years, 100% of the Fair Market Value of lands and buildings occupied by the Olive Branch Lodge.** Ron Patch moved Article 9 as printed. Seconded by Tom Amsden. Tom Amsden explained that he is the Sitting Master of the Olive Branch and there is two units, the Eastern Star and the Masons. He explained that the Eastern Star and the Masons work with charities and read a list of organizations that they donate to. Philip Perlah asked what the taxes were on this property and if this is a continuation of a previous exemption. Wanda Purdy advised that the assessment is \$431,300.00 and the taxes are \$8,937.83 per year. Deborah Aldrich, Town Clerk, advised that yes this exemption is a continuation. Ron Patch explained that this is the oldest organization in Chester. Matt Prescott asked for the total donations made in 2015. Ron Patch advised \$9,000.00 to \$10,000.00. Frank Bidwell asked if there were membership fees. Ron Patch advised that they have about 65 members and dues are \$51.00 per year. Article 9 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 10:** **To see if the Town will appropriate the sum of \$8,649.00 to the Springfield Regional Development Corporation.** Kathy Pellett moved Article 10 as printed. Seconded by Alison DesLauriers. Bob Flint, from Springfield Regional Development Corporation, advised that their report is on page 95 of the Annual Report. Article 10 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 11:** **Shall the Town appropriate the sum of THIRTEEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS (\$13,807) to help support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH. This article is by petition.** Tony Weinberger moved Article 11 as printed. Seconded by Charlie Baker. Tony Weinberger explained that the Visiting Nurse's report could be found on page 99 of the Annual Report. Article 11 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 12:** **Shall the Town appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND AND FORTY FOUR DOLLARS (\$3,044) to help support outpatient, mental health and substance abuse services by the staff of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc. This article is by petition.** Jim Bartley moved Article 12 as printed. Seconded by Richard Pease-Grant. Jim Bartley explained there was 17,000 hours worked in 2015 to 136 Chester residents for different programs. Article 12 voted in the affirmative.

- ARTICLE 13:** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of **THREE THOUSAND FORTY DOLLARS (\$3,040)** to **Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)** to assist Chester in responding to the emergency needs of the community and providing all available and applicable services to families and individuals in need. **This article is by petition.** Gladys Collins moved Article 13 as printed. Seconded by Nancy Davis. Gladys Collins explained that she has been on the Board for SEVCA for the past five years and their report could be found on page 97 of the Annual Report. Article 13 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 14:** Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of **NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$900)** to the **Women's Freedom Center** for general budget support to provide services to women and their children who are experiencing emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse and are residents of the Town. **This article is by petition.** Kari Storm moved Article 14 as printed. Seconded by Kelly Arrison. Kari Storm explained that in 2014 and 2015 the Women's Freedom Center helped 479 women and 438 children, of which 16 women and 17 children were in Chester. They have a hotline and they also support men. Article 14 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 15:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of **ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,200.00)** for the support of **Senior Solutions (formerly Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont)** for help to support seniors and their families who are trying to remain at home and not be placed in a nursing home. **This article is by petition.** Melissa Post moved Article 15 as printed. Seconded by Irwin Post. Melissa Post explained that she has been with Council on Aging for 30 years. The Council on Aging has many offerings to 46 people in Chester. Their report can be found on page 50 of the Annual Report. Article 15 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 16:** Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of **\$2,700 (two thousand seven hundred dollars)** to assist with the cost of operating the **Meals on Wheels Program of Greater Springfield** that provides daily hot and cold congregate and home delivered meals and other nutritional needs to the qualified residents of Chester. **This article is by petition.** Maria Contro moved Article 16 as printed. Seconded by Nancy Lindsay. Maria Contro thanked everyone for their support. Lynne Reed advised that she wanted to recognize Maria for all her work with the Meals on Wheels Program. Article 16 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 17:** Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of **\$2,250 (two thousand two hundred fifty dollars)** for the support of the **Current** operated by **Connecticut River Transit, Inc.,** to provide transit services to the residents of the Town of Chester. **This article is by petition.** Cynthia Whitney moved Article 17 as printed. Seconded by Tom Hildreth. Bruce Parks advised that when he was on the Board for the Current he had suggested that they improve their service to Chester. He suggested that they reroute the bus that goes from Bellows Falls to Springfield on Route 5 to go through Chester to Springfield. Phyllisa Jones-Prescott advised that the Current gives rides to people for appointments only if you are on Medicaid. Article 17 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 18:** Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of **\$800 (eight hundred dollars)** to support **Windsor County Partners,** for youth mentoring services provided to children in **Windsor County.** **This article is by petition.** Kari Storm moved Article 18 as printed. Seconded by Matt Prescott. Kari Storm advised that Windsor County Partners is in need of volunteers for youth mentoring for Chester and their report can be found on Page 106 of the Annual Report. Article 18 voted in the affirmative.

- ARTICLE 19:** Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of \$400 (four hundred dollars) to Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center of Windsor County to develop opportunities for people age 55 and older to positively impact the quality of life in the community of Chester through volunteer service. This article is by petition. Maria Contro moved Article 19 as printed. Seconded by Penny Benelli. Article 19 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 20:** Shall the Town appropriate the sum of ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,800.00) toward the support of the Community Cares Network of Chester and Andover, Inc. a non-profit organization which provides services to senior citizens, helping them to stay in their homes longer safely. This article is by petition. David Armstrong moved Article 20 as printed. Seconded by Erron Carey. David Armstrong advised that the Community Cares report could be found on page 100 of the Annual Report. Article 20 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 21:** To see if the Town of Chester will appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$3,000) to assist in the services of the Chester-Andover Family Center for individuals and families in need. This article is by petition. Sandra Vincent moved Article 21 as printed. Seconded by Georgia Ethier. Delores Robinson, Chairman of the Board of the Chester Family Center, thanked the Town for the dedication of the Annual Report to Georgia Ethier. The Chester-Andover Family Center report can be found on page 96 of the Annual Report. Article 21 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 22:** To see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to borrow money in anticipation of taxes to pay current expenses and any part of the Town's indebtedness. Lynne Reed moved Article 22 as printed. Seconded by Charlie Baker. Article 22 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 23:** To act on the reports of the Town Officers for the year ending December 31, 2015. Alison DesLauriers moved Article 23 as printed. Seconded by Richard Pease-Grant. Article 23 voted in the affirmative.
- ARTICLE 24:** To transact any other business deemed proper when met, not including the expenditures of Town Funds or other business acted upon in the preceding Articles. David Walker made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Julie Hance. Meeting adjourned at 8:26.

A true record.

Deborah J. Aldrich, Town Clerk

John DeBenedetti, Chairman, Select Board

William E. Dakin, Jr., Moderator

Alison DesLauriers, Chairwomen, Chester Town School District

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